

Putting Veterans First

Obama seeks to aid vet-owned small businesses

On April 26, 2010, the White House established a pair of interagency task forces to help federal agencies award more contracts to small businesses.



The first task force will focus on improving procurement opportunities for all small businesses and helping agencies meet statutory contracting goals. The second group will focus exclusively on improving contracting opportunities for small businesses owned by veterans and service-disabled veterans (a subcategory that typically receives among the lowest percentage of set-aside contracts).

The new Interagency Task Force on Federal Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses will provide the White House with recommendations in the next 120 days for removing barriers to small business participation in the government marketplace. Those suggestions, according to the memo, could include unbundling large projects, improving the training of federal acquisition officials and using new technologies to enhance federal small business programs.

In a separate executive order, President Obama established the Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small Business Development. The group will focus on developing policies, such as expanded mentor-protégé relationships, which will help agencies meet the goal of awarding at least 3 percent of their contracts to small businesses owned by disabled veterans.

The executive order directs the task force to develop proposals that would improve training and counseling to veteran-owned firms; reduce paperwork and administrative burdens; and enhance the company's access to capital.

- [Read the Improving Procurement Executive Order](#)
- [Read the Veterans Small Business Development Executive Order](#)
- [Read the News Release](#)

Training Topic

When Should a VA FSS Contractor Recertify its Business Size?

- What is a small business?

A small business is a concern that is organized for profit, with a place of business in the U.S., and which operates primarily within the U.S. or makes a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor. Further, the concern cannot be dominant in its field, on a national basis. In addition, the concern must meet the numerical small business size standard for its industry. The size standards, which have been approved by the Small Business Administration (SBA), that determine whether or not a FSS contractor is a small business can be seen below.

- Under 550 employees for firm's that sell commodities
- Annual sales below \$13.5 million for service contractors

- When should a FSS contractor recertify their business size?

The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (FASA) granted agencies the authority to establish contracts with multiple firms for the same or similar products, known as multiple award contracts (MAC). Also, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 provided for the use of multi-agency contracts and what have become known as government-wide acquisition contracts (GWAC). Agencies have increasingly used these types of contracts, which can be extended up to 10 years for the VA FSS, to quickly meet their acquisition needs rather than issuing new contracts. Thus under a VA FSS contract, a firm's business size is determined on the date that the business submits a self-certification in its initial offer, which is subsequently verified by a VA FSS contractor. If a business is small as of that date, agencies may place orders pursuant to the original contract and consider these orders as awards to a "small business" for the length of the original (5 year) contract period, even if the company outgrows the initial contract's size standard.

According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), a small business is required to recertify their size status in a VA FSS contract when:

- (1) An option contained in the contract is exercised
- (2) A small business is purchased by, or otherwise merges with, another business

Please note that an eligible FSS user/agency may request contractors to certify their business size at the time a quote is either issued and/or submitted.

- How can a business determine their size?

Since it is difficult (at times) to determine a firm's business size with mergers, wholly owned subsidiaries, foreign interests, etc., a company can complete [Form 355](#) and submit it to the SBA.

News You Can Use

Trade Agreements Act (TAA) Compliance

****Follow-up to the October 2009 FSS E-Newsletter****



All FSS vendors are required to certify that all of the items offered under their contract are compliant with the [Trade Agreements Act \(TAA\)](#). The TAA is the enabling statute that implements numerous multilateral and bilateral international trade agreements and

other trade initiatives. Since the estimated dollar value of each FSS Schedule exceeds the established TAA threshold, the TAA is applicable to all nine VA FSS Schedules. In accordance with the TAA, only U.S. made or designated country end products shall be offered and sold under FSS contracts. Please note that Taiwan recently became a TAA designated country.

- [Review the list of approved TAA countries](#)

We would like to remind companies with products on their contract that are produced by another vendor that they need to be aware of the requirements set forth by the TAA. Since more products are being manufactured in non-trade compliant countries, such as China, you can avert any potential problems by:

- (1) Reading and understanding the laws
- (2) Establishing and implementing a process to closely monitor the Country of Origin for all products.

National News

Recent Emergency & Disaster Declarations

Section 833 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 109-364) allows State, local and tribal Governments to use the VA Federal Supply Schedule to procure products and services for recovery activities resulting from a major disaster declared by the President under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). As such, there were 10 major disasters declared by the President during the month of April 2010, which can be seen below.

Major Disaster Declarations (April 2010)

| Number | Date | State | Disaster Type |
|----------------------|------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1897 | 4/02 | New Jersey | Severe Storms |
| 1898 | 4/16 | Pennsylvania | Severe Winter Storms |
| 1899 | 4/16 | New York | Severe Storms |
| 1900 | 4/19 | Minnesota | Flooding |
| 1901 | 4/21 | North Dakota | Severe Winter Storm |

| Number | Date | State | Disaster Type |
|----------------------|------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1902 | 4/21 | Nebraska | Severe Storms |
| 1903 | 4/23 | West Virginia | Severe Winter Storms |
| 1904 | 4/23 | Connecticut | Severe Storms |
| 1905 | 4/27 | Virginia | Severe Winter Storms |
| 1906 | 4/29 | Mississippi | Severe Tornadoes |

What's New?

Important FSS Contact Information

Due to our recent restructure, we merged the FSS Service and Supply helpdesks. As such, please use the following contact information (regardless of the schedule that your firm holds a FSS contract under (whether commodity and/or service)) when you are seeking to reach the FSS helpdesk.

- E-mail: helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov
- Phone # (708)786-7737
- Fax # (708)786-5828

Please note that we also updated the FSS Service website, which can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <http://www.fss.va.gov/>.

VA FSS Working for You

Tip of the Month

Are you registered with GSA e-Buy?

[e-Buy](#), a component of [GSA Advantage!](#), is an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool that is designed to facilitate the request for and submission of quotes or proposals for commercial products and services that are offered through Federal Supply Schedules and Government-wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs). Through the e-Buy system, federal purchasers (buyers) may prepare and post an RFQ/RFP for specific products and services for a specified period of time. Once posted, contractors (sellers) may review the request and post a response.

- [How Does e-Buy Work?](#)
- [Why Should I Use e-Buy?](#)
- [e-Buy Training \(Buyers & Sellers\)](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

We do not currently have any FSS customer training classes scheduled at this time. However if you would like to attend a training session, schedule a new one, or request additional information, please contact Ms. Veronica Hazen at Veronica.Hazen@va.gov. Please note that the FSS Customer Training is **ONLY APPLICABLE TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**.

FSS Personnel will be attending the following conferences:

- GSA Expo – Orlando, FL (May 4 – 6, 2010)
- Spring 2010 Medtrade Conference – Las Vegas, NV (May 11 – 13, 2010)
- 2010 National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition – Washington DC (May 15 – 20, 2010)

Recently Awarded FSS Contracts (April 2010)

Pharmaceutical, Dental, Patient Mobility, & X-Ray:

- NnoDum Pharmaceuticals: V797P-5155B (Small Pharmaceutical Business)
- AMAG Pharmaceuticals, Inc.: V797P-5158B (Large Pharmaceutical Business)
- Merry Walker Corporation: V797P-3201M (Small, Woman Owned Patient Mobility Business)
- Chemstar/Comet Medical Supply, Inc.: V797P-3203M (Small Disadvantaged, 8(A) Patient Mobility Business)
- Newcomer Supply: V797P-5157B (Small, Woman Owned Invitro Diagnostics and Reagents Business)
- Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc.: V797P-4284B (Large Invitro Diagnostics and Reagents Business)

Medical/Surgical Equipment:

- Salus Corporation DBA ICP Medical: V797P-4290B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- Beatty Marketing & Sales, LLC: V797P-4288B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- Kirby Lester, LLC: V797P-4241B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- Quality Surgical Repairs, Inc.: V797P-4216B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- Bovie Medical Corporation: V797P-4286B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- Joerns, LLC: V797P-4285B (Large Med/ Surg Business)

Medical Professional & Laboratory Testing Services & Cost-Per-Test:

- Remede Consulting Group, Inc.: V797P-7266A (Small Professional Medical Healthcare Services Business)
- XPRT Staffing, Inc.: V797P-7265A (Small, Woman Owned Professional Medical Healthcare Services Business)
- Qualified Homecare: V797P-7263A (Small Disadvantaged, Woman Owned, 8(A), Professional Medical Healthcare Services Business)
- Alpha Nursing Services, Inc.: V797P-7264A (Small, Woman Owned Professional Medical Healthcare Services Business)
- Medicus Healthcare Solutions, LLC: V797P-7262A (Large Medical Healthcare Services Business)
- Healthcare Resources, Inc.: V797P-7267A (Small, Woman Owned Professional Medical Healthcare Services Business)

In order to obtain pricing information for all of the companies referenced above, please review the [NAC Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#) or [GSA E-Library](#). If you have any questions/concerns or would like to learn more about a specific topic and/or issue, please feel free to contact the FSS helpdesk by phone at (708)786-7737 and/or by e-mail at helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov.